

3. (Three Times Amended) The method as claimed in Claim 1 wherein the step of assigning further comprises the step of:

adding a priority value to an authentication group comprising a plurality of users, in an authentication table.

18. (Three Times Amended) An apparatus for prioritizing a network management request sent by a management station to a managed element, comprising:

a priority assignment routine which assigns a priority value to the network management request received by the managed element dependent upon a user identifier in a network management header included in the request, the user identifier identifying the user of an application from which the request was sent; and

a network management request routine which schedules the network management request in the managed element dependent on the assigned priority value.

20. (Three Times Amended) The apparatus as claimed in Claim 18 wherein the priority assignment routine further comprises:

a priority value assignment routine which adds a priority value to an authentication group comprising a plurality of users, in an authentication table.

27. (Three Times Amended) An apparatus for prioritizing a network management request sent by a management station to a managed element, comprising:

a priority assignment routine;

a network management request scheduler;

means, within the priority assignment routine, for assigning a priority value to the network management request received from the managed element dependent upon a user identifier in a network management wrapper included in the network management request, the user identifier identifying the user of an application from which the request was sent; and

means, within the network management request scheduler, for scheduling the network management request in the managed element dependent on the assigned priority value.

28. (Three Times Amended) A computer program product for prioritizing a network management request sent by a management station to a managed element, the computer program product comprising a computer usable medium having computer readable code thereon, including program code which:

assigns a priority value to the network management request received by the managed element dependent upon a user identifier in a network management header included in the request, the user identifier identifying the user of the application from which the request was sent; and

schedules the network management request in the managed element dependent on the assigned priority value.

*Amendments to the claims are indicated in the attached "Marked Up Version of Amendments" (pages i - iii).*

*Please add new Claims 29-34.*

29. (New) A method for prioritizing a message requesting information stored in a managed element, the message being sent by a management station to the managed element, comprising the steps of:

assigning a priority value to the message received by the managed element dependent upon a user identifier in a network management wrapper included in the request, the user identifier identifying the user of an application from which the request was sent; and

scheduling the message, by the managed element dependent on the assigned priority value.

30. (New) The method of Claim 29 wherein the message is in the form of a Simple Network Management Request.

31. (New) A method for prioritizing a Simple Network Management Protocol message sent by a management station to the managed element, comprising the steps of:

assigning a priority value to the message received by the managed element dependent upon a user identifier in a network management wrapper included in the request, the user identifier identifying the user of an application from which the request was sent; and

scheduling the message, by the managed element dependent on the assigned priority value.

32. (New) A method for prioritizing a network management request sent by a management station to a managed element, comprising the steps of:

assigning a priority value to the network management request received by the managed element dependent upon a source identifier in a network management wrapper included in the request, the source identifier identifying the source of an application from which the request was sent; and

scheduling the network management request, by the managed element dependent on the assigned priority value.

33. (New) The method as claimed in Claim 32 wherein the step of assigning further comprises the step of:

adding a priority value to the source identifier in a source identification table.

34. (New) The method as claimed in Claim 33 wherein the step of scheduling further comprises the step of:

extracting the source identifier from the network management request; and

determining the priority value by using the extracted source identifier to index the source identification table.